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DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERNS OF CRYPTID EYEWITNESS REPORTS FROM LAKE CHAMPLAIN, LOCH NESS, AND OKANAGAN LAKE

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ABSTRACT: The distributional patterns of sighting times of reported large, unknown aquatic animals in Loch Ness, Scotland, and Okanagan Lake, Canada, were compared with similar data from Lake Champlain, U.S.A. The results show that the distributional patterns are probably not an outcome of the observers' behavior, but a consequence of the behavior of the animals themselves. These findings are supportive evidence for the existence of such unknown aquatic animals.

INTRODUCTION

In a previous paper (Kojo 1991), the author proposed that, by isolating a behavioral characteristic reported for large, unknown aquatic animals in Lake Champlain, U.S.A. (Champ), it is demonstrable that such animals do, in fact, exist. An apparent increase of sighting reports right before sunset suggests nocturnal behavior. The author also pointed out that the distributional pattern of sighting times is quite different from that for similar unknown animals reported in Loch Ness, Scotland (Nessie). Sighting times of the animals reported in Loch Ness have a very peculiar distributional pattern; there are two peaks, one in mid-morning (between 10 and 11 a.m.), and the other in mid-afternoon (between 3 and 4 p.m.), with an apparent decrease of sightings in the middle of the day (between 1 and 2 p.m.). Mackal (1976: 85) interpreted this pattern not as a result of the behavior of the animals themselves, but of the human observers; i.e., "we would expect fewer persons to be watching the loch at night and during the midday or siesta period."

However, if this is actually the case, the same midday decrease should also be observable in the pattern of sighting reports from Lake Champlain, as it is unlikely that midday behavior of the people around Loch Ness and Lake Champlain are significantly different. The fact that the same midday

decrease is not observable in the Lake Champlain reports suggests that the distributional pattern of sighting times of the animals reported in Loch Ness is likewise a result of a behavioral characteristic associated with the animals themselves. That the pattern is a product of sampling error is hardly conceivable because the sample size is fairly large (n = 122).

In order to test the above hypothesis, the distributional pattern of sighting times of similar animals reported in another body of water, British Columbia's Okanagan Lake (Ogopogo), was examined and compared with those of the animals reported in Lake Champlain and Loch Ness.

Method

In order to test the hypothesis that the distributional pattern of sighting times at Loch Ness is a result of the animals' behavior, we should ideally examine the distributional patterns of sighting times of known animals (e.g., seals, otters) in the same lake, and whose behavioral patterns are known. However, because such data are not easily available, the distributional patterns of sightings of similar unknown animals in other lakes was examined in order to determine if the same pattern is observable. An attempt was made to examine the sighting patterns of as many similar unknown animals in other lakes as possible. However, published data on sighting times of similar unknown animals in other lakes are very few. The only instance for which a sufficient number of sighting times is known is for the animals reported in Okanagan Lake, British Columbia. The reported times of 82 sightings between 1923 and 1990 are shown in Table 1.

Results

The distributional pattern of sightings of the animals reported in Okanagan Lake (Fig. 1) is apparently quite different from that of the animals reported in Lake Champlain (Fig. 2), and is similar to that of the animals reported in Loch Ness (Fig. 3). In the sighting patterns of the animals reported in Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness, the mid-morning peaks occur at exactly the same time; i.e., between 10 and 11 a.m. Although there is a 1-hour difference, the mid-afternoon peaks are similar: between 4 and 5 p.m. for Okanagan Lake, and between 3 and 4 p.m. for Loch Ness. While there is again a 1-hour difference, the midday decrease of sightings is also similar: between 12 noon and 1 p.m. for Okanagan Lake, and between 1 and 2 p.m. for Loch Ness. It is hardly conceivable that the midday behavior of the people around Okanagan Lake and Lake Champlain are significantly different, while the midday behavior of the people around Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness are the same. Therefore, it is highly probable that the similar distributional patterns of sighting times of the animals reported in Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness are a result of a common behavioral characteristic associated with the animals themselves.

Table 1.—Listing of all available large, unknown animal sighting reports from Okanagan Lake which include specific or approximate sighting times.

Item no.	Year	Month	Day	Time	Source
1	1923	Jul.	21	10 a.m.	Moon 1977:50
2	1925	Aug.	17	7 a.m.	Moon 1977:169
3	1926	Jul.	19	7 a.m.	Moon 1977:170
4	1926	Early Sep.		10 a.m.	Moon 1977:172
5	1931	Jul.	25	9 a.m.	Moon 1977:174
6	1935	Oct.	6	2 p.m.	Moon 1977:175
7	1948	Feb.	26	7 a.m.	Moon 1977:176
8	1949	Jun.		Shortly before 8 a.m.	Moon 1977:176
9	1949	Jul.	19	2:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:177
10	1949	Jul.	19	4 p.m.	Moon 1977:177
11	1949	Jul.	19	5:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:177
12	1949	Jul.		7 p.m.	Moon 1977:176
13	1950	Jun.	25	9:45 a.m.	Moon 1977:178
14	1950	Jun.	29	5:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:178
15	1950	Aug.	12	4:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:178
16	1950			8 p.m.	Gaal 1986:28
17	1951	May	19	8 a.m.	Moon 1977:179
18	1951	Jun.		10 a.m.	Moon 1977:179
19	1951	Jul.	21	10:30 a.m.	Moon 1977:60–61
20	1951	Jul./Aug.		4 p.m.	Moon 1977:179
21	1951	Aug.	3	6 a.m.	Moon 1977:180
22	1951	Late Sep.		9:30 a.m.	Moon 1977:180
23	1952	Jul.	6	Between 12 and 2 p.m.[1]	Moon 1977:180
24	1954	Jul.	3	3:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:181
25	1955/56	Summer		11 a.m.	Moon 1977:182
26	1958	Jul.	19	8 a.m.	Moon 1977:182
27	1958	Sep.	10	3:45 p.m.	Moon 1977:182
28	1958	Sep.	10	4:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:183
29	1962	May		5:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:184
30	1962	Jul.	17	8 a.m.	Moon 1977:184
31	1962	Jul.		4 p.m.	Moon 1977:184
32	1962	Aug.		7 p.m.	Moon 1977:185
33	1964	Aug.		5 p.m.	Moon 1977:185
34	1967	Mid-Jul.		Between 6 and 7 p.m.[2]	Moon 1977:187
35	1967	Late Jul.		Between 2 and 3 p.m.[3]	Moon 1977:187
36	1968	Apr.		12:10 p.m.	Moon 1977:76
37	1968	Jul.	23	5:45 p.m.	Moon 1977:188
38	1968	Sep.	7	6:15 a.m.	Moon 1977:188
39	1969	Aug.	22	10 a.m.	Moon 1977:83
40	1969	Mid-Dec.		4 p.m.	Moon 1977:189
41	1970	Feb.	22	3 p.m.	Moon 1977:190
42	1970	Jun.	14	8:55 p.m.	Moon 1977:191
43	1970	Jun.	23	8:45 p.m.	Moon 1977:191
44	1970	Jun.		6:15 a.m.	Gaal 1986:116
45	1970	Jul.	20	7:15 p.m.	Moon 1977:191
46	1970	Aug.	21	11:30 a.m.	Moon 1977:191

TABLE 1.—Continued.

Item no.	Year	Month	Day	Time	Source
47	1970	Oct.	10	10:15 a.m.	Moon 1977:192
48	1970	Nov.	1	1 p.m.	Moon 1977:192
49	1971	May	5	3 p.m.	Moon 1977:90, 192
50	1971	Aug.	2	6 p.m.	Moon 1977:90
51	1974	Apr.	29	12 p.m.	Anonymous 1974
52	1974	Jun.	9	10:30 a.m.	Gall 1986:38
53	1974	Jul.		8 a.m.	[4]
54	1974	Late Aug.		Shortly after 4 p.m.	Moon 1977:92
55	1976	May	16	9:15 a.m.	Gaal 1986:39
56	1976	Jun.	30	12:30 p.m.	Gaal 1986:116
57	1976	Jul.	2	4:30 p.m.	Gaal 1986:40
58	1976	Jul.	17	1:30 p.m.	Moon 1977:194
59	1976	Jul.	22	9:50 p.m.	Moon 1977:97
60	1976	Aug.	3	Between 1 and 2 p.m.	Moon 1977:94
61	1976	Aug.	23	6 p.m.	Anonymous 1976
62	1976	Sep.	4	10 a.m.	Gall 1986:118
63	1977	May	18	6:15 p.m.	Gall 1986:118
64	1977	Aug.	8	12 p.m.	Gall 1986:43
65	1977	Nov.	5	11 a.m.	Gall 1986:43
66	1979	Aug.	5	4:30 p.m.	Gall 1986:45
67	1981	Jun.	12	6 a.m.	Anonymous 1981
68	1983	Jun.	23 or 27	2:45 p.m.	Gaal 1986:102
69	1983	Sep.	5	5 p.m.	Gaal 1986:102
70	1984	Jan.	28	2 p.m.	Gaal 1986:120
71	1984	Mar.	2	10:45 a.m.	Gaal 1986:103
72	1985	Jun.	28	6 a.m.	Anonymous 1985
73	1989	Jul.	30	3:55 p.m.	Kirk 1989:75–76
74	1989	Aug.	1	3:15 p.m.	Kirk 1989:77
75	1989	Aug.	26	10:45 a.m.	Kirk 1989:77–78
76	1989	Aug.	26	11:15 a.m.	Kirk 1989:78
77	1989	Aug.	29	3:45 p.m.	Kirk 1989:79
78	1990	Jul.	17	10:30 a.m.	Kirk 1990:87
79	1990	Jul.	17	11:30 a.m.	Kirk 1990:87
80	1990	Jul.	17	8:30 p.m.	Anonymous 1990a
81	1990	Aug.	5	2:15 p.m.	Kirk 1990:85
82	1990	Aug.		1:30 p.m.	Anonymous 1990b

[1] Regarded as 1 p.m.
[2] Regarded as 6 p.m.
[3] Regarded as 2 p.m.
[4] Gary S. Mangiacopra, personal communication, 1992.

DISCUSSION

If the observed patterns of sighting time distributions are more probably a result of behavioral characteristics associated with the animals themselves, this represents strong supportive evidence for their existence. This also raises the possibility that the animals reported in Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness

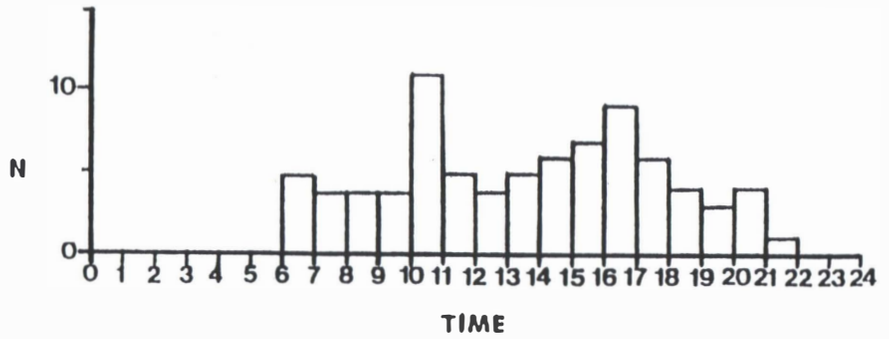

FIG. 1.—Sighting time distribution of large, unknown aquatic animals reported in Okanagan Lake, Canada.

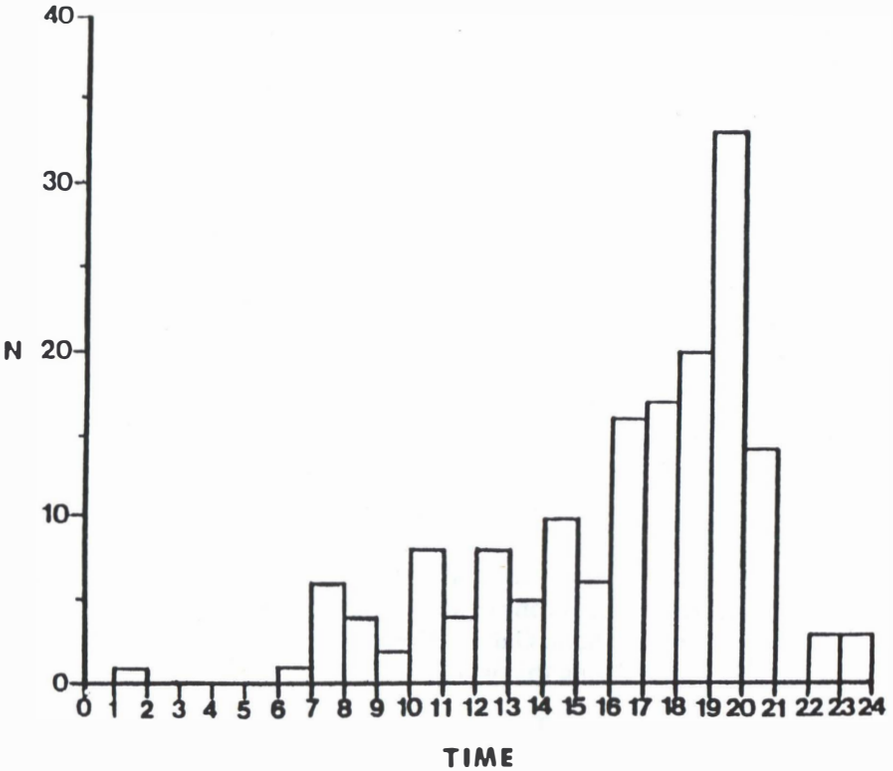

FIG. 2.—Sighting time distribution of large, unknown aquatic animals reported in Lake Champlain, U.S.A.

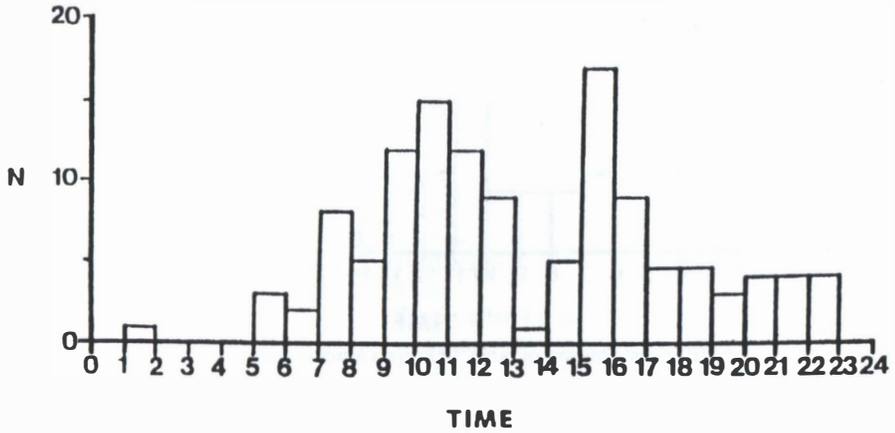

FIG. 3.—Sighting time distribution of large, unknown aquatic animals reported in Loch Ness, Scotland.

are different species from the animals reported in Lake Champlain. However, this does not necessarily mean that the animals reported in Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness are the same species, although the possibility is enhanced by these findings. It would be interesting to determine if there are corresponding similarities and differences in other behavioral and morphological characteristics of the animals reported in Lake Champlain, Loch Ness, and Okanagan Lake.

As already proposed (Kojo 1991), the animals in Lake Champlain are probably nocturnal. In terms of the contrasting patterns of sighting time distribution, it is proposed that the animals in Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness are not nocturnal. Those investigators wanting to undertake fieldwork at Okanagan Lake and Loch Ness should take into account the fact that the probability of sightings is highest in mid-morning and mid-afternoon, and lowest around noon.

Sighting time data are unavailable not only in most "lake monster" reports, but also in many reports of other cryptids. Sighting time data are, however, very important. If it can be demonstrated that the distributional patterns of sighting times result from behavioral characteristics of the animals themselves, then this represents strong evidence for the existence of such animals.

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